

the **lead** legacy

The Prospects for the Peak District's Lead Mining Heritage

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Peak District National Park Authority Lead Rakes Project
In partnership with English Heritage and English Nature, 2004

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Foreword

The surviving lead mining remains of the Peak District are nationally and in some cases internationally significant. This was one of the largest, richest and longest-worked orefields in Britain and this country in turn was Europe's main supplier of lead for many centuries. Today the vestiges of this once-vital industry have great landscape, cultural, archaeological, ecological and geological merit. Centuries of mining have helped shape what we now value in the Peak District today, one of Britain's best-loved landscapes - a special place where its importance has been recognised by designating it a National Park, the top tier of landscape designation in Britain.

However, many of the surface remains of the lead mining industry in the Peak District have been lost in the last hundred years. Only about a quarter of what once existed now survives in reasonable condition and degradation continues, mainly through mineral operations and agricultural activity.

There is an urgent need to act now to safeguard the remaining lead mining sites and landscapes of high conservation value. A minority of features are protected as Scheduled Monuments, candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest or are currently conserved within agri-environment scheme agreements. However, these measures currently do not provide the necessary safeguards for the majority of the high-priority sites. At the same time, there is no adequate mechanism to protect landscape character at mining sites.


English Heritage, English Nature and the Peak District National Park Authority have worked in partnership to produce this report, at a critical time for this important resource, to raise awareness of the loss of lead mining heritage at a national and regional level. They are working together to secure the conservation of the lead legacy in the Peak District. There is also a need to work with local communities to promote understanding of the strong links with the past and the importance of safeguarding these unique features for future generations.

All of us must now work together to achieve sustainable, integrated management that reflects the interests of all parties.

Action must be taken now, so that this unique and irreplaceable heritage is not lost forever.



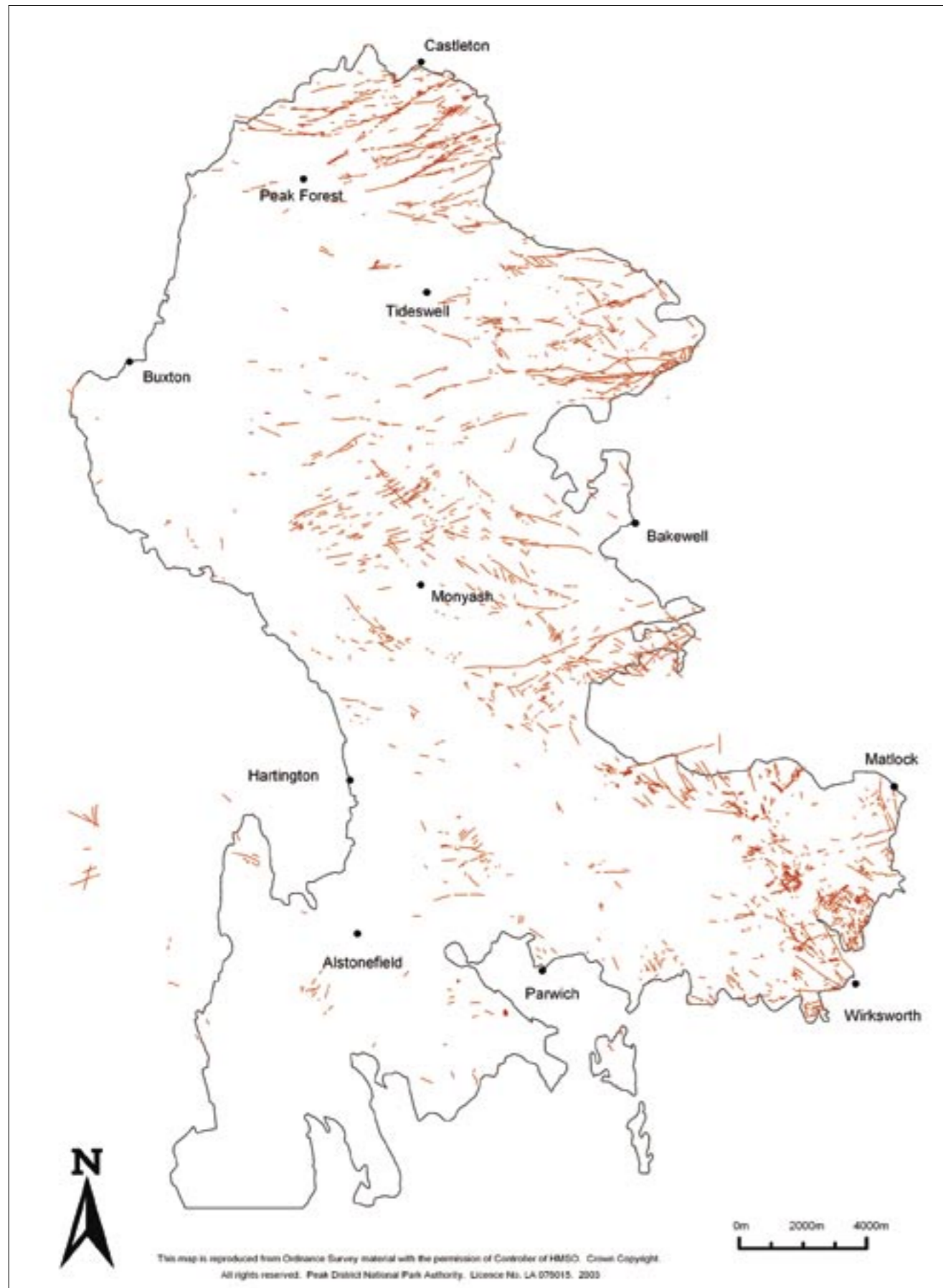
Martin Doughty
Chair of English Nature



Tony Hams
Chair of the National Park Authority



Sir Neil Cussons
Chair of English Heritage



The distribution of lead mining remains in the Peak District orefield which have been lost or badly damaged (red); limestone plateau - black line.

Summary

This report highlights the ongoing losses of important historic lead mining remains in the Peak District and sets out the urgent action that is necessary to safeguard this valuable and multi-faceted part of our heritage.

About three-quarters of these important features have been removed or are in significantly damaged condition. Only a small percentage of identified high-priority examples are protected, some through statutory designation and others conserved short-term by agri-environment schemes - these measures, as they stand, do not provide the wide ranging protection so urgently required.

Losses have reached a critical point where action to conserve further vital elements of the lead mining heritage is essential now if irreplaceable examples of sites and landscapes are not to disappear.

Acting on these concerns, the Peak District National Park Authority launched the Lead Rakes Project in 1996. This takes an integrated approach to implementing safeguards for the wide-ranging variety of lead mining features.

One outcome of the Project has been the completion of this report, produced as a partnership between the National Park Authority, English Heritage and English Nature.

Its main aims are to:

- Present Inventories of high-priority 'Regionally and Nationally Important Lead Mining Sites' known to date and 'Lead Mining Landscapes' that should be conserved.
- Highlight conservation challenges and opportunities and explore ways of achieving sustainable management for the future. Only then will it be possible to retain all high-priority sites and landscapes.

To place these primary aims in context, this report also:

- Summarises the geological origins and the history of lead mining in the Peak.



- Reviews the many interests found at lead mining sites and landscapes today.
- Summarises the survey findings of the Lead Rakes Project to date and the current degree to which high-priority sites are protected.
- Illustrates the conservation successes and challenges encountered.

In reviewing the way forward, the report highlights the need to:

- Win hearts and minds by promoting understanding and acting as advocates for the importance of the lead mining resource and by disseminating information widely.
- Continue to implement the Lead Rakes Biodiversity Action Plan and meet archaeological and geological conservation targets.
- Undertake further data collection and research over the whole orefield.
- Generate resources to make all the above possible.

It also stresses the necessity of:

- Reviewing further statutory designation of important sites and encouraging enhanced positive management of designated sites in an integrated way.
- Identifying and implementing appropriate mechanisms for the protection of historic landscape character.
- Ensuring that future agri-environment schemes recognise and target all the important facets of the lead mining resource, and introduce enhanced measures to make this possible.
- Making the conservation and enhancement of lead mining sites an economic asset to landowners.
- Seeking changes to Environmental Impact Assessment and Waste Management regulations to facilitate their ability to protect all important lead mining sites and landscapes.
- Seeking changes to Minerals Planning Guidance legislation to prevent unwarranted removal of the historic and wildlife resource.
- Developing policies to ensure the Inventories of 'Lead Mining Sites' and 'Landscapes' of special importance are adequately incorporated into the review of the National Park Management Plan and preparation of the Local Development Framework.

Fully effective lead mine heritage conservation will only be possible if all these measures are addressed. If these challenges are met then the resource can be safeguarded for the future.

About three-quarters of lead mining sites in the Peak District have been lost in the last 100 years. Those that survive, as here at Hurdlow End near Peak Forest, are often of great archaeological and ecological interest (National Monuments Record/English Heritage). In contrast, modern removal is sometimes total, as here at Longstone Edge where the workings are so large that you have to look carefully to see the large machines on site (National Monuments Record/English Heritage).

A Vision for the Future - Sustainable Conservation of the Lead Mining Heritage

Centuries of lead mining within the Peak District have left a legacy of some of the most significant and visible features within the landscape. Many features in this nationally important and highly unusual landscape are worthy of conservation but the resource is at high risk through removal for minerals and agricultural 'improvement'. Many lead mining remains are of international, national or regional importance for their landscape, cultural, archaeological, ecological and geological interest.

Having entered a new century, following one that has seen an unprecedented loss in our wildlife and historic fabric, how do we address the future of what remains of the Peak District's mining heritage?

Legally protected archaeological, botanical and geological sites must be retained and managed well. But our vision must surely extend beyond this minimum, identifying further sites and landscapes of national and regional significance and working towards safeguarding them.

The starting point for the future should be a presumption in favour of conservation of all sites of significant value.

Our vision for the future is that it will be exceptional rather than normal to see features of conservation interest lost, although this is not to say that every mining site will survive; there may be overriding reasons for development in some cases. We need to work together, establishing a shared commitment, to use existing protective measures and to develop new ones that safeguard irreplaceable examples of our lead mining heritage. These will be incorporated in a living landscape of the future, not one that fossilises a landscape from a previous age. The aim is to see the lead mining heritage fully accepted as an integral part of the environmental, historical and cultural value of the Peak District.

To achieve adequate safeguards for this highly significant resource the following actions have been, and continue to be, needed:

- Reach a fuller understanding of the resource and its many types of interest.
- Identify high-priority sites and landscapes that cover the full range of interests where conservation efforts should be focused.
- Take urgent action, where possible, to safeguard these places of high conservation interest before irreplaceable examples of the very varied resource are lost forever.
- Identify, and find solutions to, the conservation challenges that stand in the way of achieving this.
- Take further action, once implementation measures are in place, to secure the future of all high-priority sites and landscapes.



Many fine lead mining sites survive today and hopefully can be saved for future generations to appreciate. A good example is at Black Rakes west of Middleton by Wirksworth where there are extensive mining hillocks and numerous capped shafts hidden by impenetrable bracken in summer. This site currently is not protected by statutory designation (photographer John Barnatt, PDNPA).

In addition, we need to:

- Promote the value of the lead mining heritage so that owners, managers and the public will better appreciate the importance of lead mining remains and will be enthusiastic advocates for their protection.
- Continue to take action at sites of lesser priority to secure survival where possible or, where future development is permitted, to minimise its impact on the existing resource.
- Encourage more-sustainable development so that, as far as possible, this can contribute positively to the conservation value of the lead mining resource in the Peak District.

Management of high-priority sites needs to be well-informed, learning from archaeological, historical, ecological and geological studies. It should include care for physical features, where necessary consolidating them, as well as tailoring grazing regimes or other habitat management to maximise the ecological value. Where features are to be lost, they should be thoroughly recorded beforehand. A representative selection of the best sites should be considered, with landowners' help, for public access where high quality interpretation and other learning opportunities would be provided. Communities with a lead mining history have a part to play in celebrating their ties with their past and being active participants in its conservation for future generations.